

DRAFT

**SCOTTSDALE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
PINNACLE CONFERENCE ROOM
7575 EAST MAIN STREET
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA
OCTOBER 19, 2004
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Ned Sickle, Vice Chairman
Margaret Dunn, Commissioner
Jerry Gleason, Commissioner
John Holdsworth, Commissioner
Sally Shaffer, Commissioner
Gordon Zuckerman, Commissioner

ABSENT: Tom Morrow, Chairman

STAFF: Kathy O'Connor
Kathy Montalvo
Bob Cafarella

OTHERS PRESENT FOR ALL OR PORTIONS OF THE MEETING:

Carla
Brent DeRaad
Tom Silverman
Rich Wetzel

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Sickle called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Tourism Development Commission to order at 8:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

A formal roll call confirmed members present as stated above.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER DUNN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2004 MEETING AS PRESENTED. THE

MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SHAFFER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

BED TAX COLLECTION & FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. O'Connor explained the pro forma was not included in the Commission packet because nothing has changed and will be reviewed at the retreat on November 2. She reported the bed tax numbers are up nine percent in August. She further reported, year-to-date the numbers are up significantly.

DESERT DISCOVERY CENTER

Ms. O'Connor stated the Desert Discovery Center has been a project that has had a long-standing interest from the community. She introduced Rich Wetzel, former Tourism Manager, Carla, Tom Silverman, former Councilman, and Bob Cafarella, Preservation Director, who will provide an overview of the project. Ms. O'Connor reported in 1996, the Tourism Development Commission recommended and provided funding for a preliminary feasibility study and concept plan. In 1999, the City retained Langdon Wilson Architects to do the study. Because there have been a great number of changes in five, we need to look at how this project fits with today's priorities.

Rich Wetzel presented information on the project history. He explained the concept is to provide a true Sonoran Desert experience for residents and visitors. This was of particular interest to the tourism industry based on a destination attraction study that proposed a similar concept as a potential visitor attraction.

Bob Cafarella presented information on the Preserve trails and gateway access area. He reported the dedicated preservation tax has allowed them to use a portion on improvements. He further reported the focus groups indicated they wanted to have some place where there is an easy trail for people who did not want to take long hikes. It was felt that the "Gateway" site would be an appropriate location for the Desert Discovery Center. It was felt there should be an educational element that would tie into the Scottsdale Schools.

Tom Silverman, General Manager of chaparral Suites Hotel, explained that when Carla called him a couple of months ago to get involved with this project he went out and walked the site, and it was truly overwhelming. He stated he felt this project would be a tremendous plus for visitors and residents. He further stated that private funds would be used to build the building. This center would allow people to come and experience the Sonoran Desert.

Ms. O'Connor requested information on the timing of the "Gateway" site. Mr. Cafarella replied the reason the discussion about the Desert Discovery Center is timely is because we are beginning the major access improvements next summer. We will start planning the "Gateway" site the following year in 2006.

Carla, Executive Director of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust, thanked the Commission for putting this on the agenda. She stated this project is important to allow visitors and citizens to enjoy the Sonoran Desert. She further stated it is our hope that this project can move in tandem with the public trail and opening of the Gateway. She reported the reason the Desert Discovery Center was tabled was because of the land acquisition issue. Recently, the City purchased the land from the Toll Brothers so the project has gained renewed interest. She further reported our hope is that the building will be paid for from private funds. She commented that the study needs to be updated.

Commissioner Dunn inquired about the timing for updating the feasibility study. Carla replied the hope is to have it updated as soon as possible.

Vice Chairman Sickles inquired how the Commission could help with this project. Carla replied with updating the feasibility study.

Mr. DeRaad stated the focus of the research is about uniqueness of the Sonoran Desert and the ability for people to experience it. The Desert Discovery Center would provide access and allow people to experience the desert.

Mr. Wetzel stated the study is very site specific. He further stated that he felt it would not be a big deal to update the study.

Carla reported there has been interest in the capital campaign.

Commissioner Holdsworth stated he is a proponent of the Desert Discovery Center and requested they take his comments in context. He noted the report indicates the City has identified \$5 million from the Tourism Development fund noting that is a very different position than what has been presented today. He inquired if there are tourism funds allocated for capital improvements. Ms. O'Connor replied in the negative. She explained at this point, there are still a lot of loose ends and a lot of planning that needs to be done regarding who pays for what. Carla stated there would be a capital fundraising project and the majority of funds will come from the population at large.

Ms. O'Connor stated she received an email from Chairman Morrow regarding the access policy of not allowing motorized vehicles into the Preserve and he felt allowing jeep tours, for example, would increase the value to the tourism industry. Carla explained that the City Council approved a non-motorized vehicle policy in the Preserve. She further explained that that issue is being addressed and they are looking at providing exceptions to specific areas to allow jeep tours.

SCOTTSDALE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU UPDATE

Mr. DeRaad provided a CVB update. He reported there would be a familiarization tour later in October. The CVB will be entering an agreement with the Salt River Indian Community. He presented information on the Tommy Bahama Golf Tournament and the Golf World Tournament.

Commissioner Zuckerman inquired about the status of the San Francisco Giants facility. Mr. DeRaad stated the CVB is taking a secondary role. He commented on the importance of keeping the Giants Spring training facility in Scottsdale.

Ms. O'Connor further updated the Commission on the facility sites under consideration.

2004 LEISURE VISITOR INQUIRY STUDY REPORT AND ANALYSIS

Ms. O'Connor reported that for the past six years the Tourism Development staff, in conjunction with the Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau staff, has managed a Leisure Visitor Inquiry Study designed to ascertain certain characteristics and preferences among leisure travelers who have inquired to the CVB for information about the destination. This data is currently one of the CVB contract performance measures. This is the final year of the current contract with Behavior Research Center who conducted the survey.

She explained the City's primary purpose in conducting the study is to document a conversion rate among those inquirers, i.e. the number of individuals who actually visit Scottsdale after contacting the CVB and obtaining information.

She reviewed the most significant findings from this year's study results.

Mr. DeRaad stated the trend is toward people using the SCVB website or other travel related destination websites.

Ms. O'Connor stated, as discussed at a prior Commission meeting, future similar studies will need to reflect the changes in the use of the internet, increased relationship marketing efforts, and other adjustments designed to better track CVB performance measures, and to deliver information that is useful and actionable.

Commissioner Holdsworth stated that he felt the Commission should focus on long-term strategic planning.

FY 2003-2004 YEAR-END SCVB PERFORMANCE REPORT

Ms. O'Connor reviewed the year-end SCVB Performance Report which was included in the Commission packet. She further stated the CVB has met or exceeded all of the contract levels of performance that were established for FY2003-2004.

NOVEMBER 2, 2004 TDC ANNUAL RETREAT AGENDA

Ms. O'Connor reviewed the retreat agenda and requested suggestions for changes or additions.

Commissioner Dunn stated there is a lot proposed to be accomplished at the retreat. She further stated she felt we need to be realistic regarding what we are able to accomplish at the retreat.

Commissioner Holdsworth stated all of the topics on the agenda deserve their attention, but the intent of the retreat is not to solve all of the issues so we should layout the issues of most importance. He suggested reviewing all of the items at the beginning of the retreat and determine how much time will be devoted to each item.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ms. O'Connor announced the City Council approved the Commission's event funding recommendations. She reported the City Council also took the Commission's request to fund the Parada del Sol out of the General Fund.

Ms. O'Connor reported Sally Shaffer has been appointed to the Enhanced Municipal Services District Commission.

Ms. O'Connor discussed the highlights of the Smith Travel Report.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMISSION BUSINESS

Ms. O'Connor reported the next regularly scheduled meeting would take place, Tuesday, November 16, 2004.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

“For the Record” Court Reporters.